Chichikogusa

Chapter 31

BY TAGAWA MI

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Cleaning/Lettering - Arleea

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IT'S THE 6 TH VOLUME! MY DAUGHTER WAS ONLY A BABY WHEN I STARTED THIS SERIES, BUT SOMEHOW SHE'S OLDER THAN SHIROU NOW! I'M ALWAYS SURPRISED BY HOW FAST CHILDREN GROW.

—TAGAWA MI

ちちこぐさ

【父子草】

6

田川ミ

BLADE COMICS

ちちこぐさ

【父子草】

6

田川ミ

MAG Garden

ISBN978-4-8000-0629-5
C9979 ¥571E

9784800006295

雑誌53940-36
定価：本体571円＋税
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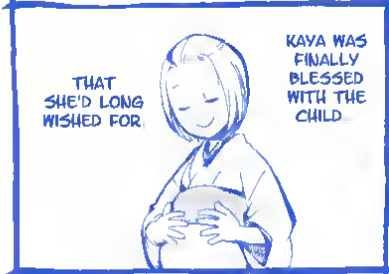
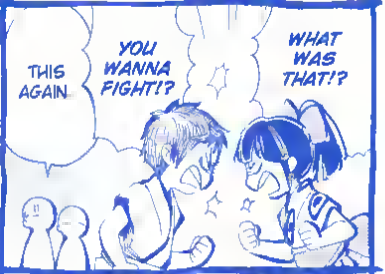
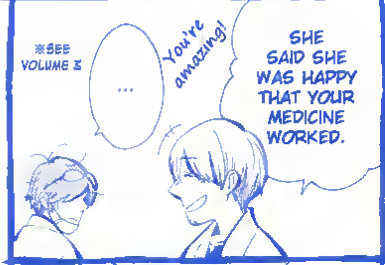
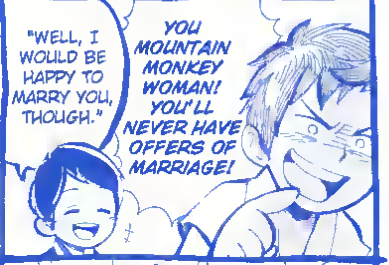
WE MEET SHIORI'S FATHER, FUNADO. KNOWING TORAKICHI'S CIRCUMSTANCES AT WORK, FUNADO GIVES TORAKICHI A SUGGESTION. TORAKICHI WANTS TO THINK IT OVER, AND TRIES TO ASK HIS SISTER FOR ADVICE WHEN HE RETURNS HOME WITH SHIROU FOR OBON* BUT...

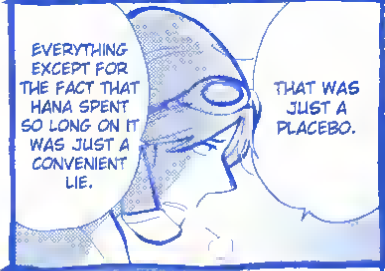
*OBON IS AN ANNUAL JAPANESE BUDDHIST EVENT TO HONOR THE SPIRITS OF ONE'S ANCESTORS


KAYA WAS FINALLY BLESSED WITH THE CHILD
THAT SHE'D LONG WISHED FOR

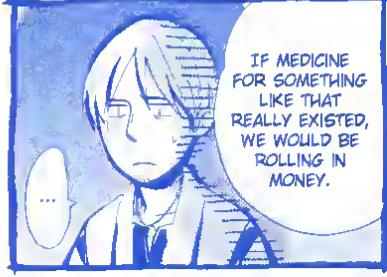

THIS AGAIN
YOU WANNA FIGHT!?
WHAT WAS THAT!?

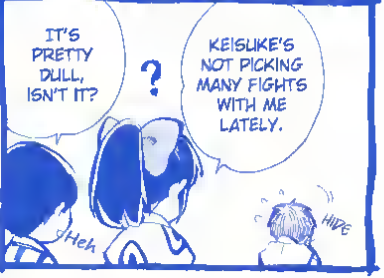

※SEE VOLUME 2
...
You're amazing!
SHE SAID SHE WAS HAPPY THAT YOUR MEDICINE WORKED.

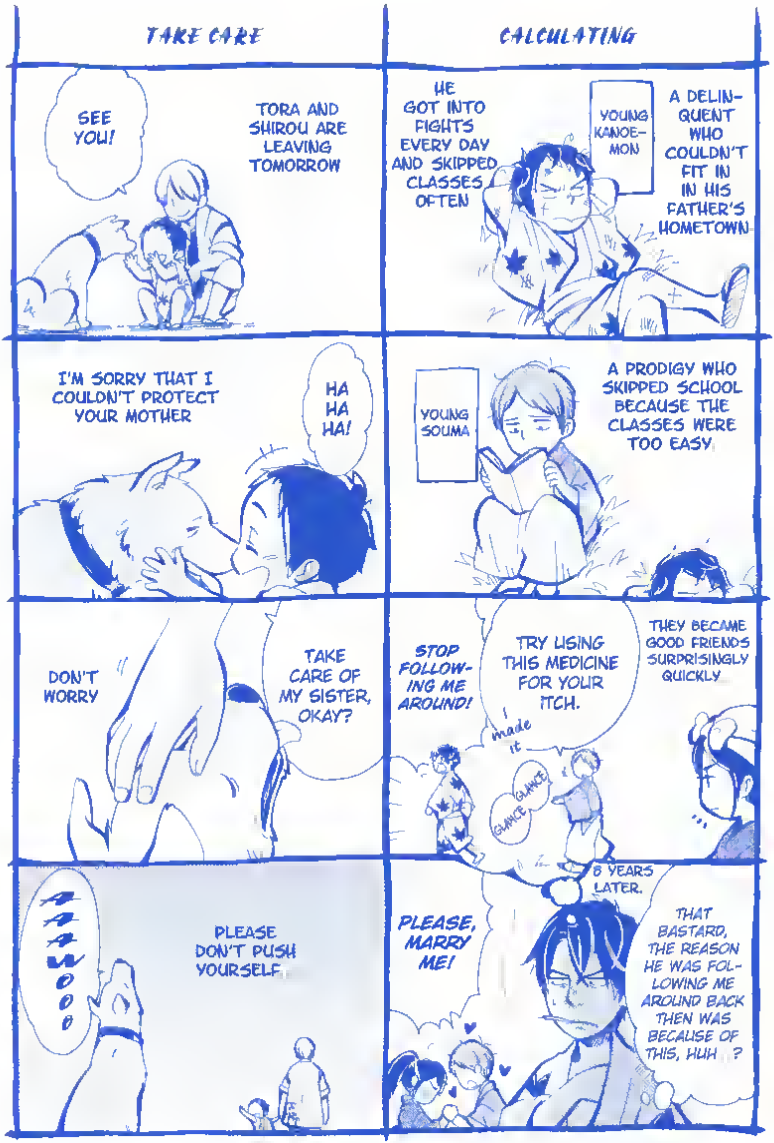

"WELL, I WOULD BE HAPPY TO MARRY YOU, THOUGH."
YOU MOUNTAIN MONKEY WOMAN! YOU'LL NEVER HAVE OFFERS OF MARRIAGE!


EVERYTHING EXCEPT FOR THE FACT THAT HANA SPENT SO LONG ON IT WAS JUST A CONVENIENT LIE.
THAT WAS JUST A PLACEBO.

BLUUUSH
YOUUUU!
HUH?
?


...
IF MEDICINE FOR SOMETHING LIKE THAT REALLY EXISTED, WE WOULD BE ROLLING IN MONEY.


IT'S PRETTY DULL, ISN'T IT?
?
KEISUKE'S NOT PICKING MANY FIGHTS WITH ME LATELY.
Heh
HIDE


TAKE CARE
SEE YOU!
TORA AND SHIROU ARE LEAVING TOMORROW
I'M SORRY THAT I COULDN'T PROTECT YOUR MOTHER
HA HA HA!
DON'T WORRY
TAKE CARE OF MY SISTER, OKAY?
AAWOOO
PLEASE DON'T PUSH YOURSELF
CALCULATING
HE GOT INTO FIGHTS EVERY DAY AND SKIPPED CLASSES OFTEN
YOUNG KANOE-MON
A DELIN-QUENT WHO COULDN'T FIT IN IN HIS FATHER'S HOMETOWN
YOUNG SOUMA
A PRODIGY WHO SKIPPED SCHOOL BECAUSE THE CLASSES WERE TOO EASY
STOP FOLLOW-ING ME AROUND!
TRY USING THIS MEDICINE FOR YOUR ITCH.
I made it
GLANCE
GLANCE
THEY BECAME GOOD FRIENDS SURPRISINGLY QUICKLY
8 YEARS LATER.
PLEASE, MARRY ME!
THAT BASTARD, THE REASON HE WAS FOL-LOWING ME AROUND BACK THEN WAS BECAUSE OF THIS, HUH?

ちちこぐさ
【父子草】

CHAPTER 31: SHIORI'S FATHER

CHAPTER 32: SUMMER HOMECOMING

CHAPTER 33: VILLAGE KIDS AND PLAYING IN THE RIVER

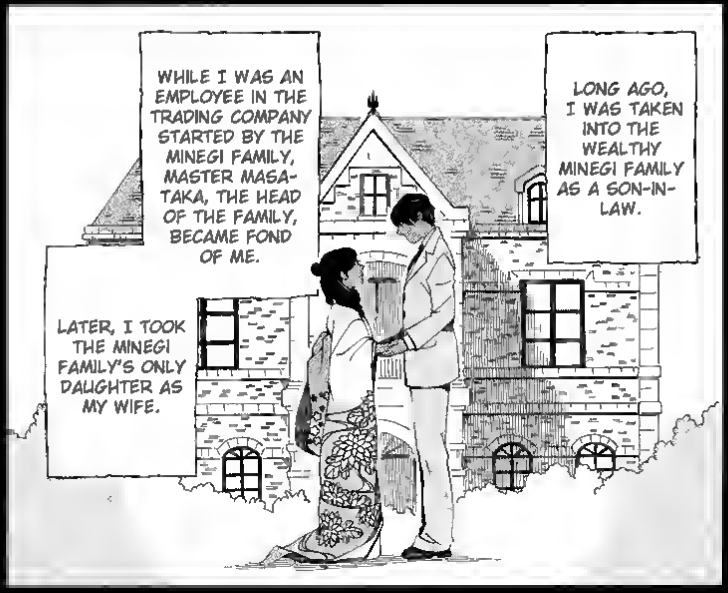
CHAPTER 34: TATSUMI AND TORAKICHI (PART 1)

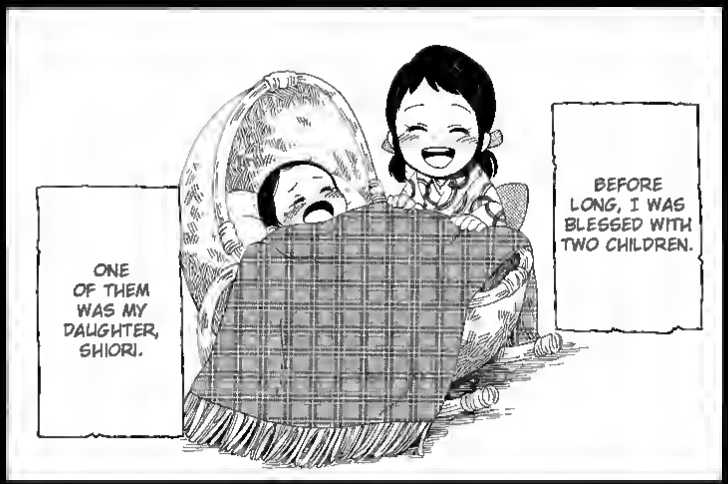
CHAPTER 35: TATSUMI AND TORAKICHI (PART 2)

CHAPTER 36: FORWARD

CHICHIROGUSA
[FATHER AND CHILD GRASS]
AUTHOR: TAGAWA MI

CHAPTER 31 – SHIORI'S FATHER


WHILE I WAS AN EMPLOYEE IN THE TRADING COMPANY STARTED BY THE MINEGI FAMILY, MASTER MASATAKA, THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY, BECAME FOND OF ME.
LONG AGO, I WAS TAKEN INTO THE WEALTHY MINEGI FAMILY AS A SON-IN-LAW.
LATER, I TOOK THE MINEGI FAMILY'S ONLY DAUGHTER AS MY WIFE.


ONE OF THEM WAS MY DAUGHTER, SHIORI.
BEFORE LONG, I WAS BLESSED WITH TWO CHILDREN.

SHE HAD A VERY KIND PERSONALITY, UNLIKE HER MOTHER, WHO WAS VERY SENSITIVE AND HOT-TEMPERED.
SHIORI WAS A CHILD THAT LAUGHED OFTEN.
MY DAUGHTER DID EXACTLY WHAT HER MOTHER TOLD HER.
MY POOR LITTLE BOY...
RESTRAIN YOURSELF, PLEASE.
DON'T DO ANYTHING YOUR SICKLY BROTHER CAN'T DO, OKAY?
BE A GOOD GIRL.
IN ORDER TO AVOID MAKING HER UNSTABLE MOTHER SAD OR ANGRY...
I NEVER ASKED MY DAUGHTER'S TRUE FEELINGS.
I WAS REASSURED BECAUSE MY WIFE AND MY SICKLY SON HAD MY GOOD-NATURED DAUGHTER WITH THEM, AND I ENTRUSTED THEM TO HER.
I WAS BUSY WITH MY WORK AROUND THAT TIME, SO I OFTEN LEFT THE HOUSE FOR 1 OR 2 YEARS AT A TIME.

!
WHAT'S THE MATTER, THIS LATE AT NIGHT?
THAT WAS THE DAY MY WIFE HAD ARRANGED FOR SHIORI TO BE MARRIED WITHOUT ASKING HER FIRST
THEN, ONE DAY...
FATHER, I HAVE SOMETHING TELL YOU...
HMM?
IT WAS THE FIRST TIME...
MY DAUGHTER DEFIED MY WIFE.

FIDGET
FIDGET
TORA!

HUG
SHIORI! THANK GOD, YOU WERE ABLE TO SNEAK OUT.
YEAH!
WELL, UM...
!

*TN: IN THE JAPANESE, SHIORI CALLS TORAKICHI "TORA-CHAN" AND HER FATHER, WHO IS APPARENTLY EASILY CONFUSED, CALLS HIM TORA-CHAN-KUN

WHAT ON EARTH WERE YOU PLANNING TO DO WITH MY DAUGHTER?
SO...
MY FATHER WAS THE ONE THAT BROUGHT ME HERE.
TORA, IT'S ALL RIGHT!
FATHER PLEASE STOP! I ASKED TORA TO TAKE ME!
MY WIFE HAS ALREADY ARRANGED FOR MY DAUGHTER TO BE MARRIED
GRAB
WERE YOU PLANNING TO SECRETLY TAKE HER FAR OUT TO THE COUNTRYSIDE? DID YOU THINK YOU WOULDN'T BE FOUND OUT!?
I'M SURE YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT WILL HAPPEN...
IF YOU TAKE HER LIKE THIS, DON'T YOU?
...

TO ME, HER FATHER?
DO YOU NOT HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY...
THRUST
I'M VERY SORRY!

I AM WELL AWARE THAT I'M NOT IN THE POSI-TION TO BE ASKING FOR THIS.
BUT I'M ASKING YOU, EVEN THOUGH I KNOW HOW RUDE IT IS!
I, I...
LOVE SHIORI!
I PROMISED HER WE'D BE TOGETHER ONCE I BECOME A FULL-FLEDGED SELLER.
I WILL DEFINITELY MAKE HER HAPPY!
SO...

MY AND MY WIFE'S EYES WERE ALWAYS LOOKING ONLY AT OUR SICKLY SON.
AND THIS CHILD HAS ALWAYS ACCEPTED OUR DEMANDS WITHOUT A SINGLE COMPLAINT.
MADE MY DAUGHTER SUFFER SINCE SHE WAS YOUNG.
I HAVE...
"I DON'T WANT THE ENGAGEMENT THAT MOTHER DECIDED FOR ME."
"I HAVE SOMEBODY ELSE I WANT TO BE WITH."
TODAY, FOR THE FIRST TIME SHE CRIED BEFORE ME, SAYING...

AND AT THAT TIME, SHE WAS LAUGHING WITH A FACE I HAD NEVER SEEN BEFORE.
I SAW YOU 2 OR 3 TIMES WHEN YOU CAME TO VISIT MY DAUGHTER,
I KNEW ABOUT YOU, LIKE THE FACT THAT YOU WERE A SELLER WITH A GOOD REPUTATION
FATHER...?
BOTH OF YOU, PUT OUT YOUR LEFT HANDS.

SLIP
...
THIS IS...?
WED-DING...
RING...?
THIS IS SOME-THING CALLED A WEDDING RING.

SHIORI I WAS GOING TO GIVE IT TO YOU THE DAY YOU GET MARRIED...
IT WAS GIVEN TO ME BY A JEWELER ACQUAINTANCE IN EUROPE
?!
RUSTLE
IN THE WEST, THOSE WHO HAVE BECOME A MARRIED COUPLE PUT THE RINGS ON EACH OTHER, APPARENTLY.
I'M VERY SORRY THAT WE PUSHED YOU THIS FAR.
I WILL PERSUADE YOUR MOTHER.

FATHER!
I'M SORRY...
AND THANK YOU SO MUCH!
THIS WAS THE LAST TIME I SAW MY DAUGHTER.

OH, THANK YOU.
YOU'VE RECEIVED ANOTHER LETTER FROM SHIORI.
MASTER!
FATHER, MOTHER, TAKA,
I HOPE THIS LETTER FINDS YOU WELL.
AH... SHE STILL INSISTS THAT SHE WON'T READ IT...
AND MY WIFE?
IT'S UNFORTUNATE THAT I CANNOT SHOW YOU HIS FACE, SO I'VE SENT YOU HIS UMBILICAL CORD INSTEAD...
CLICK
A HEALTHY BABY BOY WAS BORN SAFELY A FEW DAYS AGO.
HIS NAME IS SHIROU.

I SINCERELY HOPE THAT THERE WILL BE A DAY YOU CAN EMBRACE THIS CHILD OF MINE..

PLEASE TAKE CARE OF YOURSELVES,

SHIORI.

BUT THEN...

MASTER, A LETTER ...

EVEN THOUGH WE ARE SEPA-RATED,

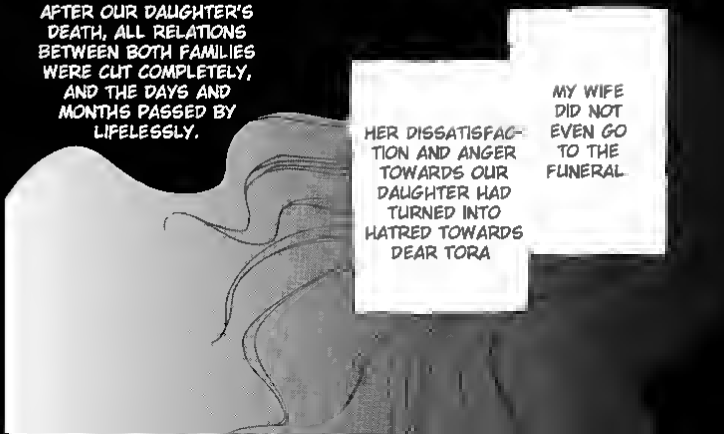
I WAS SATISFIED AS LONG AS MY DAUGHTER WAS HEALTHY AND HAPPY.

I AM SO VERY SORRY!
WHILE KEEPING YOUR DEAR DAUGHTER... WE ARE SOLELY TO BLAME FOR THIS...!
IS THAT... SHIORI'S CHILD?
YES...
!
...

SHIROU, GREET YOUR GRANDFATHER...
JUST AS THE LETTER SAID, HE'S A HEALTHY BOY WITH A LOUD CRY.
THIS IS SHIROU. HE'S JUST TURNED ONE YEAR OLD.
MY DAUGHTER SENT ME LETTERS FREQUENTLY.
AND EVERY TIME, THEY WERE ABOUT THINGS THAT SOUNDED VERY HAPPY...
IT SEEMED LIKE SHE WAS BEING TREATED VERY WELL BY YOU,
AND WAS MUCH HAPPIER THAN SHE EVER WAS AT HOME.
PLEASE... LIFT YOUR HEADS.
DRIP

I HAVE NO RIGHT TO HATE YOU...
BUT...

IT WOULD BE A LIE IF I SAID THAT I DIDN'T FEEL THAT THEY WERE SOMEHOW TO BLAME...
WHERE SHOULD I PLACE THIS OVERWHELMING SORROW...?!


AFTER OUR DAUGHTER'S DEATH, ALL RELATIONS BETWEEN BOTH FAMILIES WERE CUT COMPLETELY, AND THE DAYS AND MONTHS PASSED BY LIFELESSLY.
HER DISSATISFACTION AND ANGER TOWARDS OUR DAUGHTER HAD TURNED INTO HATRED TOWARDS DEAR TORA
MY WIFE DID NOT EVEN GO TO THE FUNERAL

YES.
UNTIL LAST YEAR, HE'D KEPT HIM WITH HIS SISTER, BUT...
FOR SOME REASON, HE SUDDENLY BROUGHT HIM ALONG
WITH HIS CHILD?
ACCORDING TO FRIENDS I'VE ASKED FOR INFORMATION, THEY'RE DOING WELL TOGETHER
OF COURSE, IT'S A LITTLE LIMITING FOR OUR SHOP, BUT WELL... WHAT CAN YOU DO, RIGHT?
...
MOST LIKELY NOT. IT HAS ONLY BEEN TWO AND A HALF YEARS SINCE YOUR DAUGHTER HAS PASSED AWAY.
CAW
CAW CAW
MORE-OVER,
HAS HE THOUGHT ABOUT A SECOND WIFE...?
...

TORAKICHI IS STILL WEARING THE RING HE RECEIVED FROM YOU. HE WEARS TWO, NOW. YOUR DAUGHTER'S AS WELL.
I CAN'T SAY ANYTHING IN THE FACE OF THAT....
SLIDE
CHAK
CHAK
...

...
CLICK
SO AWKWARD! I CAME ALONG, BUT WHAT ARE WE SUPPOSED TO TALK ABOUT?!
GLANCE
...
SO...
FIDGET
FIDGET

ゴゴゴゴ
ゴゴゴゴ
SFX: RUMBLE X7
I CAN FEEL THE HOSTILITY COMING FROM HIS ATTEN-DANT...
MAYBE IT'S JUST MY IMAGI-NATION...
AND HE'S JUST AS SCARY AS EVER!
Damn...
...
GLARE

WE HAVEN'T MET SINCE MY DAUGHTER'S FUNERAL, HUH? TIME SURE PASSES QUICKLY.
Y-YES, MORE OR LESS...
YEAH...
HAVE YOU... BEEN WELL?
FLINCH
IT SEEMS IT HAS SUCKED THE BLOOD OF AN IMBECILE.
I'M TERRIBLY SORRY, THERE WAS A MOSQUITO.
KIHACHI!
REALLY, I—
BUH!
IMBECILE?!
LEGIT
WHAAT?!
SFX WHAM

WITH ALL DUE RESPECT,
IT IS MY DUTY TO PROTECT YOU, MASTER.
I CANNOT BARE TO LEAVE YOU ALONE WITH SUCH A HOOLI—
KIHACHI!

BUT I BEG YOU, REST EASY! I WOULD NEVER LET A MOSQUITO SUCK THE BLOOD OF YOU, MASTER, IN FRONT OF MY OWN TWO EYES!
IF SUCH A THING WERE EVER TO OCCUR, I, KIHACHI, WOULD CUT MY STOMACH OPEN AND LET MY ORGANS SPILL OUT
YOU'RE BEING ANNOYING. PLEASE LEAVE FOR A WHILE.
RUSTLE
?!

DIDN'T YOU HEAR ME? GO OVER THERE!
GLARE

AS YOU WISH, MASTER...
WHAT IS WRONG THIS THIS GUY?!
SHIVER

OH, THIS YEAR I'LL BE THI...
HUH?
THAT REMINDS ME. HOW OLD?
OH, RIGHT.
UM... THAT TIME PASSES VERY QUICKLY...
SORRY ABOUT THAT. WHAT WERE WE TALKING ABOUT?
BACKED AWAY A LITTLE
SHIVER
SHIVER
GLARE
AH!
...
S-SORRY. YOU MUST MEAN MY SON, RIGHT!?
HE'S NOW 4 YEARS OLD. HE'LL BE TURNING 5 IN TWO MONTHS.
I SEE...
GLIMMER

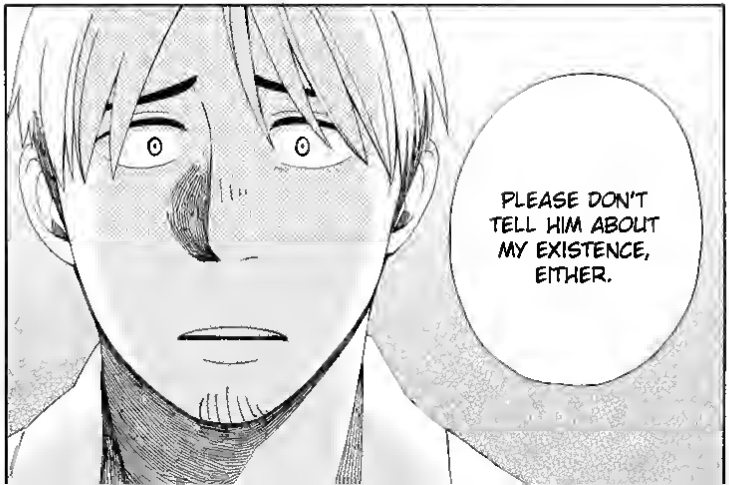
I HEARD FROM TOUJI AT NANAKUSAYA, WHERE YOU WORK,
THAT YOU'RE TAKING HIM AROUND WITH YOU. IS THAT RIGHT?
AH, YES...
HE'S STAYING AT THE SHOP AT THE MOMENT,
BUT HE'S A LITTLE SPOILED, I GUESS, BECAUSE OF IT.
HAVEN'T YOU THOUGHT ABOUT REMARRYING?
WHAT...?
I'VE HEARD IT'S CAUSING SOME PROBLEMS WHERE YOU WORK.
IT'S BEEN THREE AND A HALF YEARS SINCE MY DAUGHTER DIED. FOR THE SAKE OF YOUR SON'S FUTURE, I THINK IT'S TIME YOU CONSIDER IT.
THAT'S...

AND THEY'RE GOING TO LIMIT THE CHOICES YOU CAN MAKE IN THE FUTURE AS WELL. IF THAT'S THE CASE, I CAN NO LONGER FEEL THAT WAY
BUT YOUR MEMORIES OF HER ARE WHAT MADE YOU CHOOSE THE UNUSUAL PATH OF A TRAVELING FATHER-AND-CHILD.
I'M THANKFUL THAT YOU STILL LOVE MY DAUGHTER TO THIS DAY.
天ぷら
SIGN: TEMPURA
CAN FORGET ABOUT HER. IT'S OKAY.
YOU...

I ONLY HAVE WORDS OF ADMIRATION FOR YOU.
I WAS ALMOST BROUGHT TO TEARS WHEN I HEARD YOU WERE RAISING THE CHILD ALONE.
BUT AREN'T THERE SOME THINGS THAT YOU CAN EASE BY FINDING A NEW COMPANION?
THERE'S SOMEONE I HAVE IN MIND WHO MIGHT SUIT YOU.
CONTACT ME IF YOU'RE EVER INTERESTED. I'LL INTRODUCE YOU.
...

...
Chocolate
I'M SORRY FOR KEEPING YOU.
WELL,
UM, I...
PAT
IF IT WOULD BE OKAY...
WON'T YOU PLEASE MEET SHIROU?
UM...!
HE'S GROWN SO MUCH! AND HIS SMILE IS SO MUCH LIKE HIS MOTHER'S ...
SORRY.

I HAVE NO INTENTION OF MEETING HIM AT THIS POINT.
I CAN NO LONGER THINK OF HIM AS A GRANDSON.


PLEASE DON'T TELL HIM ABOUT MY EXISTENCE, EITHER.

THE OWNER AND HIS WIFE
OUR MARRIAGE WAS ARRANGED.
WHEN WE FIRST MET, HE HAD A FLASHY APPEARANCE AND LAUGHED CARELESSLY.
HE WAS SUCH A PLAYBOY.
THE PREVIOUS OWNER OFTEN GRUMBLED THAT THE STORE COULD NOT BE ENTRUSTED TO HIM.
BUT,

NOWADAYS, HE NO LONGER ESCAPES REALITY WITH FLIRTING
HEY.
DEEP DOWN HE'S ACTUALLY A DILIGENT AND TIMID MAN
AM I REALLY SUITED TO BE THE OWNER...?
YOU'LL BE FINE.
SOS
SOS
BUT THE FACT THAT HE COMES TO SNUGGLE WHEN HE'S TROUBLED ABOUT WORK HASN'T CHANGED
IS IT TORA AGAIN? HE'LL MANAGE SOMEHOW.
I HAVE NOTHING TO SAY.

EXTRA STORY 26- END